

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Yugoslavia

SUBJECT Military Maneuvers at Capodistria

PLACE ACQUIRED

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1. At the start of the Communist Party Assembly in Belgrade the pro-Tito faction ordered a military maneuver with a simulated attack and defense of the city of Capodistria by land and sea on 20 July 1948. Such maneuvers have become customary during important occasions and celebrations. This particular maneuver, however, had a special significance for the Yugoslavs. In Trieste irredentist circles there is a great deal of planning and activity, including talk of a projected coup against Capodistria.
2. During the afternoon of 20 July the town crier warned the population not to get alarmed if machine gun fire and mortar fire was heard since it was just an exercise. At 2300 hours the troop movements began.
3. Forces: The forces consisted of an infantry battalion, eight tanks, one horse drawn anti-tank battery consisting of four pieces and one cavalry platoon. One company left the town taking the San Canziano road with four tanks and two artillery pieces. The cavalry consisting of one platoon and some cyclists maintained liaison. The rest of the forces participating consisted of one and a half infantry companies, four tanks, and artillery pieces which were arranged to defend the city (San Canziano: Skocjan).
4. First Phase of Operations: I Offensive (I-Off) attacking forces, against I Defensive (I-Def) defending forces (See sketch). The attack came from outside the city and was made by the troops which had taken the San Canziano road. They arranged themselves as follows: two infantry platoons along the A-B stretch supported by two tanks; two platoons, two tanks and the artillery along the B-C stretch. Tanks 1 and 2 on the Mada road, 3 and 4 on the Semedella road. The artillery was placed at the crossroads. At 2315 hours the tanks advanced on the road firing salvos on the city. The infantry platoons advanced through the reclaimed agricultural lands in dispersed order. The soldiers and tanks defending the city were placed along the road which circles the city. They immediately went into action. The disorderly fire which lasted one and a half hours gave the impression of a real battle. The offensive and defensive artillery and the infantry mortars also fired a few rounds. Practice hand grenades were also used. When the troops entered the city they joined the defending troops for the second phase.
5. Second Phase of Operations: An attack by light naval units presumably coming from Trieste was carried out. The troops were deployed along the R-R-1 stretch, i.e., along the shore. They included the entire infantry battalion,


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all the tanks, the artillery battery and the ten machine guns. Two platoons with four machine guns took position along the Semedella road, against the wall of the reclaimed estate, and along the sea cliffs which run from the crossroads towards Isola. When the conventional signal was given, firing started in the direction of the sea, north and northwest. It is believed that some live ammunition was fired by the artillery since flashes were seen about halfway towards Vallone di Capodistria. These were probably caused by the explosion of small hand grenades on the cliffs of Punta Gorssa. Many hand grenades were thrown against the breakers of the Galere pier. The maneuvers lasted one hour. Then a conventional signal was given and the fire ceased. The units assembled at the port where they were addressed by a major. They then withdrew to their barracks singing and shouting "long live Tito".

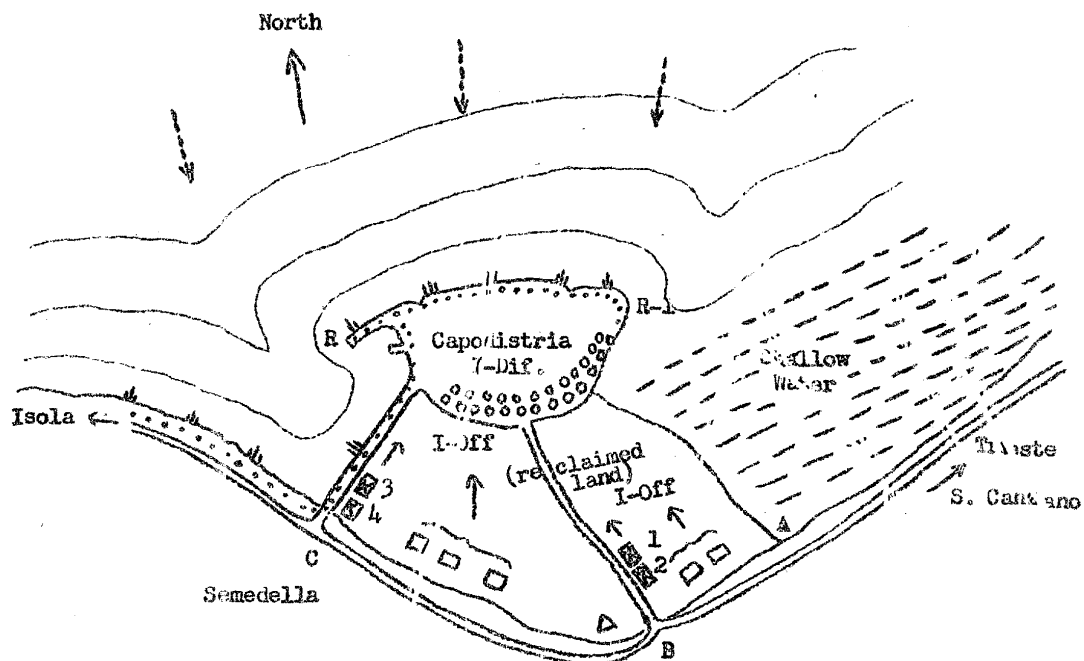
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- > Assault by sea (2nd phase)
- > Assault by land (1st phase)
- ... Defense from sea attack (2nd phase)
- ooo Defense from land attack (1st phase)

Infantry

Tanks (ex-German)

Artillery section

Forces used in the manoeuvre:

- 1 Infantry Battalion
- 8 Medium tanks
- 1 Cavalry platoon
- 1 Anti-tank battery

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